

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1-5 are amended and claims 6-21 are added. The Abstract is amended. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-5 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,497,440. A Terminal Disclaimer is filed herewith. Accordingly, the rejection is obviated and should be withdrawn.

The Examiner requested in paragraph 3 of the Office Action that "reference numerals (either in parentheses next to the claimed limitation or in a table format with one column listing the claimed limitation and another column listing corresponding reference numerals in the remark section of the response to the Office Action) to all the claimed limitations as well as support in the disclosure for better clarity" be provided. However, it is respectfully submitted that it is not general U.S. practice to provide reference numerals in parentheses in the actual claim. Further, it is respectfully submitted that the specification and drawings provide adequate support for the limitations set forth in the claims, and that the specification and claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112.

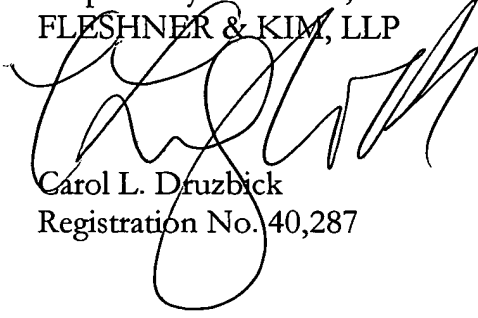
Serial No. 09/987,662
Reply to Office Action dated December 29, 2003

Docket No. MRE-0043

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, Carol L. Druzbeck, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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